

SAMUEL AND THE YOUNG MAN SAUL

NO. 1547

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on), but stand you still a while, that I may show you the word of God.”
1 Samuel 9:27.

THIS was Samuel's third interview with this goodly young man. He had spoken with him and entertained him in his parlor, giving him the place of honor, he had afterwards spent the evening with him in quiet on the housetop, and now that they were about to part he took a fresh opportunity of speaking to him. This time he spoke to him with great closeness of personal application, sending the servant out of the way that he might say things to him which nobody else might hear. He tried to speak to the young man's inmost soul. The prophet felt a deep solemnity, his whole heart saying every word that fell from his lip.

He knew that this young man was about to be made a king, to take upon him very heavy responsibilities, and he might either be a great curse to Israel or a great blessing, and therefore the man of God, with all the gravity of his years, and all the earnestness of his loving spirit, said, “Stand you still a while, that I may show you the word of God.” I think I hear his earnest tones, and accents sweetened by a great love, for Samuel loved Saul, and it was his affection which made him speak so earnestly and pointedly.

I may have among my hearers at this moment some to whom I have spoken many times, but I should like once more to have a special, personal interview with them. Come, young man, step aside and let me speak with you. Try and think that no one is here except the preacher and yourself, and that he means you when he speaks. I long this time to do my Master's work thoroughly with you in the power of the Spirit of God. This time the preacher would hold you fast, as if he said to each one, “I will not let you go unless you give your heart to Christ, and become His servant from this very hour.”

There are two things in the text about which I wish to speak. Here is the first, *the attention which he requested*, and the second, on which we shall dwell at greater length, concerns *the subject upon which he spoke*.

I. First, let us think upon THE ATTENTION WHICH SAMUEL REQUESTED.

He said to the servant, “Pass on before us,” and he passed on. Will you also kindly try to dismiss from your minds any other thoughts besides those which we will try to bring before you. Bid the servant pass on, forget for a while your business, forget your family, forget your joys, forget your sorrows. You have had enough of these, I dare say, all week. Perhaps you have been haunted by them in your sleep, your dreams have been rendered unhappy by the rehearsal of your trials. By an effort of your mind, in which God will help you, try to make these servants pass on.

I wish I could so speak that men would say of my preaching what they said of Whitefield's. One man said, “Whenever I went to church before, I calculated how many looms the church would hold”—for he was a weaver—“but when I heard Whitefield I never thought of a loom.” Another said, “While I have been in church I have often built a ship from stem to stern, but when I heard Mr. Whitefield I could not lay a plank, he took my mind right away from such things, and occupied me with higher thoughts.” I pray you, help me in my endeavor to engross your attention. Let the ships go, and the loom go, and the kitchen go, and the business go, send on the servant, and be alone now with yourself and your God.

The next point in the attention requested was the desire that he would “*stand still a while.*” They had been walking quietly down the hill till they came to the last house in the town, and when they had come fairly into the fields he said, “Stand you still while,” as much as to say—“I have something important to say, and you will catch it better if you are quiet and motionless as to your body, but especially if your mind can be still. Forget the asses that you sought after, and your father’s house, and all home concerns, and calmly listen to me.”

It is a very desirable thing when we are listening to the Gospel to let it have its full effect upon us, to give our minds up to it and say—“Let it come like the dew, and soak into my mind as the dew into Gideon’s fleece. Let it come like a shower, and let it enter into my very nature as the rain into the clods which are softened by the gentle influence of the showers.” I pray you bask in the Gospel as men do in the sunlight when they would be warm. Let the Gospel have its own legitimate effect upon you. Lay bare your bosom to it. Ask that your soul may have no stone of carelessness laid upon it, as though it were a dead thing in a sepulcher, but that it may come forth in resurrection life through the quickening word of the divine Spirit.

Is not this what the Word of God deserves? Should it not have our living, loving attention? When God speaks let all be silent. Hush, you senators, if God speaks. Sit still, you princes, if the King of kings lifts up His voice. Quiet, even you choirs celestial, if JEHOVAH speaks. An obedient homage should be paid to the voice of God by the deep awe and reverence of the spirit. Do you ever get alone and sit still, and say, as Samuel did, in the dead of night, “Speak, LORD, for your servant hears”? If you never do that, the little child Samuel may well rebuke you. He was willing that God should speak to him. But, oh! we are so busy! so busy! so sadly busy! I have heard that the great clock at St. Paul’s can scarcely be heard in Cheapside, by reason of the traffic that is going by, and so the most solemn voices are drowned amidst the din and uproar of our business, and we do not often hear God’s voice, unless we are accustomed to give ourselves a little quiet and holy stillness, and sit in our chamber alone and say, “Now, Lord, commune with me. I wish to hear Your voice. I open my Bible. I am about to read a few verses. Oh, speak with me.” I do not believe there would be very many persons left unconverted if it were their habit and practice day by day to open the Word of God with the desire that God should speak to them. Come then, dear friend, send on your servant, forget your business, and stand still that I may show you the Word of God.

As the Word of God deserves such quiet attention, *it certainly is only by such attention that it is likely to bless us.* Faith comes by hearing, but not by such hearing as some men give, for the Word goes in one ear and out the other. They hear the gospel as though it were an idle tale or a merry song, to which they listen at a street corner, and they go their way. Nay, but if you would get the blessing, you must hear as for eternity, with all your ears, and with your whole heart, praying while you do hear, “Lord, bless this to me! Lord, bless this to me!”

I remember a child who used to be noted for great attention during sermons, and his mother, noticing his deep earnestness, asked him why. He said, “Because, mother, I heard the preacher once say that if there was a piece of the discourse that was likely to be of good to our souls, Satan would try to make us lose it, and as I do not know which part God will bless me by, I try to hear it all, and to remember it all.”

Oh, when people come to listen to the preacher with such a spirit as that, it is sweet work to preach. You can easily feed hungry horses, and you can easily feed souls that hunger and thirst after righteousness, “They shall be filled.” The Lord help us to give earnest heed to His own saving Word. “Stand you still a while, that I may show you the word of God.”

But *many things arise to prevent this attention.* You cannot get some folks to be still, they are so frivolous, you cannot make them think. Some men dread the process of thinking almost as much as they would a touch of the “cat” on their backs. They cannot bear to consider and meditate. God has distinguished them above brutes by giving them the faculty of thought, but this high privilege they try to ignore. Any silly tale, or idle song, or light amusement, or pastime, will entice them, but they have no soul for serious things. They go through life, not as the bee, which sucks honey from every flower, but

as the butterfly, which regards the garden as only a place over which it may flit, and where it may occasionally alight, but gather nothing, and so begins and ends its gaudy day, and has nothing in store. Let us not be the fluttering insects of an idle day. God grant we may not follow the fashion of this foolish world. May frivolity and levity be taken away from us, and may we in sober earnestness attend to things eternal.

Others, on the other hand, are so exceedingly careful about the things of this world that you cannot get them to think of the Word of God. What is heaven to them? They know a plan for making a large profit. You shall talk to them of Christ and all His beauties, but they will not afford you a thought, jingle a half-sovereign near them and you shall excite all their desires. Inform them how they could be rich and famous, they will pay you for the prescription, but tell them about Christ and you must beg and pray them to read half a page, and as to listening to your sermon—the thing is dry, they turn away from it. O you money grubbers, have you souls at all or are you nothing else but bodies? Are you mere leather purses for holding money? Do you expect to live in the future, to live in eternity, or do you think that you shall die, like the dog that follows at your heel?

O my hearer, if you are not immortal, I can well excuse you that you think not of immortality, but if indeed you are a man made in the image of God, and destined to live forever, it is but the commonest common sense that you should begin to prepare for those eternal abodes in which you are to dwell world without end. Do stand still a while, and let nothing come in to break the silence of your spirit while you listen to the voice of God. I would earnestly persuade everyone here who is not saved to get an hour alone somehow. Make up your mind to do so. Shut yourself up, and give an hour to solemn, earnest thought and consideration of your condition before God. I am persuaded that scarcely one would do that solemnly and earnestly but what it would end well, and we should have by and by to bless God for the happy result of that hour.

II. We leave the point of the attention to be given, to consider THE SUBJECT UPON WHICH SAMUEL DISCOURSED with Saul, or rather the subject about which I would discourse at this time, if I am so happy as to have secured your ear.

He says, “Stand you still a while, that I may show you the word of God.” The subject is *the Word of God*. That God should give us a Word at all is very gracious. It is wonderful that He should condescend to speak to us, because we cannot understand much, we are like little children at the very best. For our heavenly Father to bring down the great meanings of His vast mind into human language is something very wonderful. When He spoke on Sinai with the accompaniment of tempest and lightning, it was a gracious thing for God to speak to man anyhow, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son

Jesus Christ, who is the Word, Jesus has come down into this world on purpose to interpret God to man. A man’s mind goes to another man’s mind by a word, the word tells what was in the speaker’s thought. So Christ comes from God to us. God says to us, “You wish Me to speak, that is My speech, MY SON, read My love to you in the fact that I gave My Son, read My justice, for I made *Him* bleed, read My mercy, for in Him I pass by transgression, iniquity, and sin.”

Does God speak in such golden language, does He speak by His own Son, the eternal Word, and need I ask that He should have a hearing? Shall it have come to this, that God shall give up the darling of His bosom to a cruel death and yet we will turn aside and will not regard it? The Lord grant us deliverance from such madness and wickedness, and help us to feel, if salvation be worthy of the death of the Son of God, it must be worthy of our attending to it. If Jesus thought it worth His while to bleed upon the cross for man’s salvation, it is worth my while to put everything aside till I am saved, it is worth my while to get me to my chamber, and shut the door, and feel as if I never would rise from my knees till I had found peace with God through Jesus Christ.

God is engaged in man’s salvation, even the Father, Jesus was engaged in it, even the blessed Son, and the Holy Spirit is engaged in it, even the divine Convincer of sin. Surely that which occupies the infinite mind of the three blessed persons of the divine unity, must surely call to every wise man to lend his ear, and give it all his thoughts that he may receive, obtain, possess, enjoy, and delight himself in the

precious things which God gives us freely in Christ Jesus. Then, dear hearer, do be thoughtful, and “Stand you still a while, that I may show you the word of God.”

In the particular word of God which Samuel spoke to Saul there was some likeness to the message which I am bound to deliver to you. For, first, Samuel spoke to Saul *about a kingdom*, of which this young man should be the king. He never dreamed of that before. He had thought of his father’s asses, but a throne and a crown had never entered his mind. Do know, O strange young man, you who has stolen in to this service, that there is such a thing as the kingdom of God? Jesus said, “Seek you first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Do know, young man, that you may be a king? Yea, if you give good heed to the Gospel, you shall be a king, and sing with us unto the Lord Jesus, for He has made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign with Him.

Are you occupied entirely with your business, with seeking after a degree at the University, with striving to pass an examination or gain a situation? I will not call you away from such pursuits, yet is there something higher than these. You may not be contented with such things as these, for God calls you, He calls you to a higher destiny, to something noble, so noble that those who share in it rank higher than the kings of the earth. Little did Saul dream that on this day the kingdom should be given to him, and little do you dream of it perhaps as yet, but I pray you let me show you the Word of God, for you may yet find a kingdom there, a kingdom for you, a crown of life for you which fades not away, and a seat at the right hand of God with Christ in the day of His appearing.

Samuel not only spoke about the kingdom, but he showed him the Word of God by *an anointing*. He took out a flask, which contained a little oil, and he poured it on his head. “O my hearer, stand you still a while,” and I will tell you of an anointing. If you do regard this present voice of God, and do heartily incline your ear, and come unto Christ that you may live, you shall by so doing receive an anointing from the Holy One by which you shall know all things that concern your soul and your God.

You say, “I know little about religion.” You shall be taught of God, for this is the promise, “All your children shall be taught of the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children.” You say, “I am not capable of high and noble things.” You shall be made capable, for in the day when God anoints you, you shall receive strength—“To as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” You shall receive enlightenment and illumination by the divine unction of the Holy Ghost.

Have you ever thought of this? There is not only water to wash you, but oil to anoint you. Christ can take away your sin at this moment, and He can also give you grace so that you shall leave off the habits which hitherto have bound you down, and become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Is not such a gracious visitation worth standing still to receive it?

Samuel spoke to Saul about another matter, namely, about *a change that he should undergo*. For as he talked with him he said, “You shall meet a company of prophets, and you shall prophesy, and become another man.” Little can you tell, my dear friend, what God will do with you. If you be willing and obedient you shall eat the good of the land, if the Spirit of God shall lead you in penitence to confess your sin, and in humble, childlike faith to lay hold on Christ, you shall become, in a higher sense than Saul ever was, “another man.” You shall be born again, you shall be a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Listen to these words of the blessed covenant, for I would hold you and show you the Word of God. “I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.” “I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” “I could never be a Christian,” says one. No, not as you are, but you shall be made a new man, and the new man is made in the image of Christ, and is a Christian. Have you ever heard of this? this being changed? this being totally changed? Have you never heard that God can create you for the second time? can destroy in you the power of sin, and bring you under another dominion, and make you as eager after right as you have been after wrong, and make you as happy in the service of Christ as ever you were in the service of the devil, ay, and ten thousand times more so?

And oh, I should not wonder, though you think it cannot be, He will open your mouth to talk to others about Christ. Though, young man, you little dream of such a thing at this moment, it may be the Lord has sent me to call you to Himself that you may surrender yourself to Jesus, and then, in some future day, you shall

*“Stand and tell to sinners round
What a dear Savior you have found,”*

and be as enthusiastic in the service of the Lord Jesus as ever you have been in the frivolities of the world. Does something in your heart say, “I wish that it would so happen to me”? Is there a secret something in your heart echoing to that which I am saying? Oh Lord, grant that it may be so.

This is what we want you to think about, then, the kingdom, the anointing, and the change that God can work in you. If you will come and think well of the Word of God, you will see in it that which will meet all *the past* of your life, whatever it has been. There may be blots upon it, but in the Word of God you will find that which will wash them all away. You may have wept over your life, and yet you cannot wash away its stains, but the Word of God will tell you how you shall be made whiter than snow, and made to start again in life, delivered from every crimson stain.

As to *the present*, does it puzzle you? Ah, well it may, for life is a tangled skein to those who know not God. But you shall find the clue of it, you shall thread the labyrinth, you shall see how even your afflictions work for your good, how your sickness means your health, how your being out of work and in poverty is to make you rich, how even your lying at death’s door is sent to give you life, and you shall so understand the present as to feel that with all its apparent evil it is working for your good.

And as to *the future*, would you read aright your destiny? My Lord can tell you the future by making you know that, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” Oh that men would not neglect the Word of God, either in the hearing of it preached, or in the private reading of it in their homes. For believe me, there is something in the Bible which suits just *you*. Poor fallen woman, have you strolled in here tonight? There is something for you in the Holy Scriptures. Poor despairing man, far gone in desperation, there is something in the Book on purpose for you.

I used to think that a certain text in the Bible was written with a special view to my case. It seemed to me that it might have been penned after I had lived, so accurately did it describe me. Even so, dear friend, there is something in the Bible *for you*. Just as when you have lost a key, and you cannot open a drawer, you send for a locksmith, he turns over no end of skeleton keys, till at last he has got the right one, and he moves the bolt for you, so is it with the Scriptures, there is a key for every lock, there is a clue for every difficulty, a help for every trouble, and a comfort for every grief. Only do you stand still a while, and let us show you the Word of God. Some Christian brother may find the key for you, or you may stumble on it while searching the Word for yourself, or the Holy Spirit may bring it to you. There is a word to suit your case, therefore give the Book a fair opportunity, and stand still and hear the Word of God.

Let me say to you, you know not the Word, but the Word knows you. You know not the Scriptures, but the Scriptures know you as you will never know yourself, for the Word of God is quick and powerful, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Many and many a time have persons written to me, or spoken with me, and said, “Did you intend in the sermon to make a personal allusion to me?” I have said, “Yes, I did, most certainly I did, but I never saw you in my life, and never knew anything about your case, only He that sent me bade me say this and that, and He knew who would be there to hear it, and He took care to guide His servant’s thought and word, so as to suit your case to the tittle, so that there could be no mistake about it.”

The letter came to the man’s house, as it were, with a full direction, and there was no question that God had sent it to his soul. Now, therefore, my hearer do you go to the Word of God, and it will speak home to you, if you go with the desire to be personally dealt with.

Dear friends, he who speaks at this time to you can honestly say that he is speaking out the burden of his heart. I came not hither to speak with you, young man, without first earnestly asking to be directed in each word I say, and what motive can I have in all the world in urging you to seek the Savior's love but your good? Will it concern me, do you think, at the last day, whether you are saved or not? If I set Christ before you faithfully, I shall be clear of your blood—fully clear—even if you reject my Lord. But I would put my hand on you, as I do not doubt Samuel did on Saul, and plead with you for your own sake, for the sake of all the future that lies before you, for the sake, perhaps, of some in heaven whose last words were, "Follow me," for the sake of a mother who prays for you, and is praying while you are sitting in this house of prayer, above all, for His sake, who loves to save and delights to bless.

Oh, by the wounded hand we sung of just now, and by the broken heart, and by the intense affection of the ever-loving Intercessor for sinners, do stand still a while and seek to know the Word of God.

It may be that at this moment you are put into a position in which you will have to make a choice—a choice for eternity, for heaven or for hell. God save you from making a fatal choice. There is an engagement for tomorrow which, if you follow it, will be your ruin. Do not fulfill it. May God's Spirit lead you to say at once "I am on God's side, I must be, and I will be. It is done, it is done, if He will have me, He shall have me; if He will wash me, I am ready to be washed; if He will renew me, I am pleading to be renewed; if He will but take me in hand, and bring me to Himself, here I am, here I am. 'My Father, I have sinned against heaven and before You, and am no more worthy to be called Your son.' But receive me, take me back again."

Ah, you backslider over there, I pray that you may be led to decide for the kingdom and the anointing, and undergo a change at this very hour. Let this be the time, the set time of mercy to your souls. I should not wonder but that for many years to come, if we are spared, you and I, my friend, who have never spoken together before, may have to rejoice over this present meeting.

Samuel was very pleased with Saul for a long time, though unhappily Saul disappointed all his hopes, but I hope I have met with some one anointed of the Lord, whom He intends to bless at this good hour, to whom He will say, "From this day will I bless you. Young heart, you have yielded yourself to Me, and from this day will I comfort you, bless you, cheer you, sanctify you, instruct you, cause you to grow and become strong, and I will use you in My service, and you shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels." Oh that the clock of destiny would strike tonight, and you would hear it, and solemnly declare,

*"'Tis done! the great transaction's done;
I am my Lord's, and He is mine:
He drew me, and I follow'd on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine."*

God grant it for Christ's sake.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 SAMUEL 9, 10:1-13

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—512, 507, 505

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.